Ka Awatea: A tribally-specific examination of high-achieving rangatahi

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Te Ara a Ihenga comprises:

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We are a group of Te Arawa educational researchers committed to accolading Māori student success and designing research projects that advance educational research, inform practical capabilities, and are affirmative in their cultural and philosophical forms.

By Te Arawa, With Te Arawa, In Te Arawa, Not Exclusively For Te Arawa
Rōpu Structure

Ka Awatea Project

Ngā Pae o Te Māramatanga

University of Canterbury

College of Education

Project Manager

Research Assistant 1

Research Assistant 2

University of Auckland

Victoria University of Wellington

Ua Consulting Limited
What drives Te Ara a Ihenga?

- It is quintessentially iwi driven, iwi owned and iwi (and/or Māori) funded to reinforce the rangatiratanga status of the project.

- Rejects deficit theorising

- Esteems Māori students, whānau, community and school practices that support and enable Māori success.

- Affirms and promotes Te Arawa theories and theoretical frameworks, Te Arawa worldview

- Integrates our collective tribal, institutional, disciplinary and research knowledge and experience

- Places Te Arawatanga at the centre
  - Tikanga (how we do things properly)
  - Whakapapa (how we and/or things relate to each other)
  - Mohiotanga (what we know to be real)
Ka Awatea: An iwi case study of Māori student success

Key research questions:

• **How do Te Arawa define educational success?**

• **In what ways do whānau, teachers and the wider Te Arawa community foster conditions that enable the characteristics of success to manifest?**

• **How are the characteristics of success enacted by successful Te Arawa students? To what effect?**

Table 1. *Study Participants*

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**Mahia ngā mahi: Two phases**

**Phase One**
- **Conversations** with Pakeke/kaumātua
- **Literature review**
- **Pilot study** funded by Ngāti Whakaue Education Endowment Trust
- **Eight key characteristics** developed from the pilot study (Ngā Pumanawa e Waru)

**Phase Two**
- **Questionnaires and interview questions** based on all of the above.
- **Data collected** in 8 Rotorua secondary schools
- Interviews with **Tuakana**
- Interviews with **Pakeke**
- **Findings and recommendations** developed
How do Te Arawa define educational success?
What are the key characteristics of a successful Māori learner?

**Methods**

**Questionnaire** *(Quantitative and Qualitative items)* x 138

1. **Māori Identity (Tamatekapua):**
   *What aspects of your Māori identity are most important to you? Why?*

2. **Diligence and Commitment (Rev Frederick Bennett):**
   *What advice would you give to other Māori students about staying focused and motivated at school?*

3. **Relationships (Te Ao Kapurangi):**
   *Who has supported you in being successful? What did they do that was helpful or encouraging?*

4. **Innovation and Creativity (Ihenga):**
   *Please provide an example of your innovation and creativity?*

5. **Wellbeing (Dorothy ‘Bubbles’ Huhana Mihinui):**
   *In what ways do you look after yourself to maintain your physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing?*

6. **Valuing Education (Makereti Papakura):**
   *Please explain why being successful at school is so important to you?*

7. **Humility (Dr Hiko Hohepa):**
   *What does humility mean to you?*

8. **Core Māori Values (Wihapi Winiata):**
   *How have your experiences at school enabled you to experience Te Arawatanga/Te Arawa protocols?*

**Individual interviews & focus group interviews** x 145
Key findings

1. **Mana Whānau**: Successful Māori students occupy a central position of importance within their whānau.

2. **Mana Motuhake**: A positive sense of Māori identity is crucial if Māori students are expected to express their mana tangata.

3. **Mana Tangatarua**: Bi-education: Māori students must acquire the skills to navigate success in two worlds.

4. **Mana Tū**: Successful Māori students are courageous, humble, tenacious and resilient.

5. **Mana Ūkaipo**: Place-based learning is important for Māori student learning and connection to place.
Mana Whānau: Successful Māori students occupy a central position of importance within their whānau

The study revealed that successful Māori students occupy a central position of importance within their whānau. They are nurtured into succeeding in both worlds by their whānau, are socially capable and have a developing sense of belonging across a number of contexts. Māori students who are successful appreciate that their families value education, and that their school success is important to the whole whānau because their success is seen as a driver of whānau success.

They also know that their failure is conceived of as the failure of the whānau. As such successful Māori students have a fear of not reaching their potential and letting their whānau down. Successful Māori students take the responsibility of ‘academic success’ very seriously.
Mana Motuhake: A positive sense of Māori identity is crucial if Māori students are expected to express their mana tangata

Mana motuhake is experienced via developing a sense of cultural efficacy. This includes the ability and knowledge that they can engage meaningfully with Māori culture; that their social behaviour is informed by Māori values such as manaakitanga and māhaki. Successful Māori students are more likely to experience a sense of belonging and connectedness to others in their whānau, school and community. Whānau play the most important role in terms of socialising their children into the Māori world and helping them to develop cultural efficacy.

The research indicates that many schools do not appear to play as important a role in enabling Māori identity to be developed, apart from those instrumental teachers who purposefully engage with Māori students around kapa haka, Māori studies and te reo Māori.

Māori communities tend to see young Māori as critical players in the continuation of Māori culture, language and tradition. They like to see Māori students equipped to play a meaningful and successful role in social and cultural activities.
Ka Awatea: An iwi case study of Māori student success

**Mana Tangatarua: Bi-education: Māori students must acquire the skills to navigate success in two worlds**

Academic success should not come at the expense of Māori identity – all participants saw both identities as vital to overall success. Students need the appropriate ‘navigational skills’ and ‘role models’ and a strong sense of emotional and spiritual wellbeing to navigate the two worlds of Aotearoa successfully.

The responses indicate that supportive and galvanic relationships are essential to success. Families are primarily responsible for “success as Māori” and should model what this looks like. Schools contribute largely to Māori students’ “success in the non-Māori or ‘generalist’ world” because they offer students many opportunities to be innovative and creative, to try new things and to take risks (which many Māori families cannot offer them – so they value education for this very reason). Therefore, schools offer students new experiences that “unleash their potential” to bridge their two worlds and increase their “range of opportunities” in terms of “possible futures”. Schools play a role in students’ physical wellbeing but appear to contribute minimally to Māori students’ emotional wellbeing.

The wider Te Arawa community wants Māori students to thrive in the non-Māori world but retain “a heart for things Māori” within proximity to the tribe – the ‘culturalist’ world. All participants value the reciprocal role that successful Māori will play in terms of eventually “coming home to make a difference”, “participating in the ongoing success of others” and “giving back” to their whānau and communities.
Mana Tū: Successful Māori students are courageous, humble, tenacious and resilient

Successful Māori students develop positive self-efficacy, positive self-concept, resilience and an internal locus of control to thrive in the school context and eventually beyond it. They tend to be aspirational, have high expectations and enjoy overall physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Whānau need to ensure their children have a healthy home environment that supports this physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Whānau members need to model practical resilience strategies – for example work ethic, perseverance, determination and discipline – because students look to whānau as their “first teachers” and ultimate “motivation for success”.

Māori students need “touchstone teachers” who act as mentors and as confidantes at school. These teachers look for the good in students, articulate Māori students’ potential and have high expectations of them.

Successful Māori students see themselves as contributing community members. They want the community to provide opportunities for them to meaningfully participate in the broader success of their whānau, hapū and iwi communities.
**Mana Ūkaipo:** Place-based learning is important for Māori student learning and connection to place.

Successful Māori students seek a synergy between school-based learning and the unique Rotorua/Waiairiki/Te Arawa context - what is referred to as Place-based Learning. They want to see Te Arawa role models of success made visible and prominent in schools.

Te Arawa students want Te Arawatanga to have some resonance with their educational activities, and expect Te Arawatanga to occupy a position of importance in the school curriculum in the rohe. They perceive Te Arawatanga to be a viable platform for future aspirations and achievement.
• What are the qualities of high achieving Māori students?

• In what ways do these qualities of success manifest in high achieving Māori students?
Quality 1

*High-achieving Māori students have a positive sense of Māori identity*

**Characteristics**
A belief in and knowledge of one’s self; strength of character, strength of personality; a strong will; boldness and a tendency to take risks

**Application to school & work** *(Te Arawa Icon - Tamatekapua)*
- Resilient to negative stereotypes
- Positive self-concept
- Some knowledge of language and protocols
- Connection to land and place (genealogy)

Quality 2

*High-achieving Māori students are diligent and have an internal locus of control*

**Characteristics**
Patience, commitment and a sacrifice of time and effort; an ability to overcome difficulties; resolute confidence often balanced with a quiet, unruffled calm.

**Application to school & work** *(Te Arawa Icon – Frederick Bennett)*
- Disciplined
- Self-motivated
- Attentive
- Focused
Quality 3

*High-achieving Māori students learn how to nurture strong relationships*

**Characteristics**

The ability to sustain relationships that are premised on a balance of assertiveness and warmth (manaaki) because this provides sustenance for the inner person.

**Application to school & work**  
* (Te Arawa Icon – Te Ao Kapurangi)

- Encouraging
- Willing to learn from others
- Willing to mentor others
- Aware of own strengths and weaknesses

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Quality 4

*High-achieving Māori students are curious and innovative*

**Characteristics**

An enquiring mind which probes, draws conclusions and makes associations; an exploratory orientation that is exploited in social and academic activities.

**Application to school & work**  
* (Te Arawa Icon – Ihenga)

- Courageous
- Competitive
- Curious
- Creative
Quality 5
*High-achieving Māori students look after their wellbeing*

**Characteristics**
Attention to physical, spiritual and mental health needs that are needed to flourish at school, affirming the inexplicable link between wellness and learning.

**Application to school & work** *(Te Arawa Icon – Nanny Bubbles Mihinui)*
- Healthy
- Fit
- Resourceful
- Balanced

Quality 6
*High-achieving Māori students are scholars*

**Characteristics**
An aptitude for things scholarly and a commitment to excellence are evident

**Application to school & work** *(Te Arawa Icon – Makereti)*
- Can apply themselves
- Driven
- Purposeful
- Aspirational
Quality 7
*High-achieving Māori students possess humility*

**Characteristics**
A quality which is often a cultural point of difference because it is about service to others, generosity of spirit and putting others before the self.

**Application to school & work** *(Te Arawa Icon – Dr Hiko Hohepa)*
- Puts others before self
- Accept criticism
- Work in service to others
- Team player

Quality 8
*High-achieving Māori students understand core Māori values*

**Characteristics**
A synthesising of the most meaningful qualities in one’s Māori culture, portrayed by way of aroha (love), manaaki (care) and wairua (spirituality).

**Application to school & work** *(Te Arawa Icon – Wihapi Winiata)*
- Manaakitanga – ability to care and be hospitable to others
- Kotahitanga – ability to commit to a kaupapa/vision
- Wairuatanga – moral compass and sense of social justice
Recommenda/ons for Māori students

• Hold fast to your deeply held cultural values and moral standards.
• Embrace additional opportunities to enhance your cultural competence.
• Maintain a balance in terms of your wellbeing – especially your tinana and hinengaro – find time to nourish both.
• **Value your teachers and friends within the context of the school community because they are valuable sources of knowledge and support in times of struggle.**
• Value your whānau because they are you, and you are they.
• **Seek out and maintain relationships with positive role models that you aspire to be like.**
• Mahia te mahi! Drive your own learning – ask questions, do the hard work required, and celebrate all successes (large and small).
• **Be humble – seek out and acknowledge the support, assistance and expertise of others and receive correction, compliments and feedback gracefully.**
Recommendations for Whānau

• **Ensure that your home environment is positive, safe, caring and nurturing. Students who are products of such environments are more content, emotionally secure and resilient.**

• Be tamariki-centric – place your child at the centre of your whānau. Make their success and wellbeing the most important thing in your household.

• Nurture your child’s sense of Māori identity – give them a sense of belonging and connectedness to their reo, marae, hapū and iwi.

• **Make your home a place of learning – establish routines and rituals that prioritise education.**

• Be present and active in the school context – this signals to your child that you value education (and *their* education in particular).

• Encourage dialogue, open communication and good listening in your home.

• Ensure that your children are exposed to positive role models – children emulate the behaviours and characteristics of ‘significant others’.

• **Model coping skills – talk to your children about how to be resilient in the face of adversity.**
Recommendations for Teachers and Schools

• Value Māori students’ cultural distinctiveness and support them to develop a degree of academic and cultural self-confidence and self-belief.

• **Articulate Te Arawa hapū and iwi features in teaching and learning.**

• Actively support Māori students toward a state of cultural enlightenment and encourage them to embrace opportunities to engage within the wider community.

• Premise your instruction on evidence-based and culturally-responsive practices.

• Build upon students’ cultural and experiential strengths to help them acquire new skills and knowledge.

• **Utilise Te Arawa role models of success, living or dead, to promote aspiration, cultural pride and achievement.**

• **Ensure academic programmes have meaningful links to Te Arawa people, their history and their reo.**

• Visionary school leaders should promote and model the right balance between whakahīhī (pride) and māhaki (humility) in their interactions with students, whānau, staff and wider community members.
Recommendations for Iwi

• Continue to be involved with local schools.
• **Provide visionary and proactive leadership** – ‘reach in’ to schools; don’t wait for schools to ‘reach out’.
• Provide stewardship to whānau, encouraging them to be tamariki-centric.
• **Within reason, provide and promote marae-based reo and tikanga wānanga.** Such offerings provide whānau with opportunities to become more culturally competent and connected.
• Where possible, support the organisation and provision of local cultural events (e.g., Te Matatini and Te wiki o te reo Māori) – and ensure they are connected and relevant to the local context.
• Interact with local educational policy-makers, academics, teachers and interested whānau in your forward-planning.
• Provide places and spaces for voices to be heard, particularly wahine and rangatahi.
• **Provide support for the educationally vulnerable, because they too have talents and gifts to offer.**
Recommendations for Policy-Makers

- Draw on iwi and local educational expertise.
- Make links to iwi-specific education strategies.
- Find out about iwi aspirations regarding education.
- Personalise and/or contextualise large Māori education projects to better suit local area needs.
- Provide seminars and workshops on Māori and tribal education priorities.
- Familiarise administrators with local tikanga and kawa.
- Adopt a Treaty approach of shared responsibility for educational advancement.
- Institutionalise a clearly marked path to student success.
Whakaaro Whakamutunga
High achieving Māori students:

• Are proudly Māori
• Are proud about coming from Rotorua and, where appropriate, of being Te Arawa
• Are aspirational and goal-driven
• Come from tamariki-centric families
• Have positive role-models in their lives
• Have ‘touchstone’ teachers
• Are humble – they seek out and acknowledge the support, assistance and expertise of others and receive correction, compliments and feedback gracefully.
• Are curious about the opportunities and possibilities of them raising a family, working and contributing positively to Te Arawa and Rotorua in the future.
Ka Awatea: A Model of Māori Student Success

Te Ao Tawhito
(Ancient World)

Te Ao Hurihuri
(Todays’ World)

Te Ao Tūroa
(Future World)

Toi o Ngā Rangi

Kete Tuātea

Local, National, Global

Whānau, Hapū, Iwi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Mana Motuhake (Sense of Self)

Mana Tū (Sense of Resilience)

Mana ūkaipo (Sense of Place)

Mana Tangatarua (Sense of Two Worlds)

Whānau, Hapū, Iwi

Local, National, Global

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Work

Leisure

Technology

Sport

Education

Whare Kura

Kete Tuārangi

E Waru Pūmanawa

Identity

Diligence

Relationships

Creativity

Wellbeing

Scholarship

Humility

Values

Hawilla

Hawilla

Schooling
Title of project
*Ka Awatea: An iwi case study of Māori students’ success*

Contract Number: 11RFC37

PI Name: Angus Macfarlane

PI Institute: University of Canterbury

Year of Report: 2014

Project researchers:
Angus H. Macfarlane, Melinda Webber, Candy Cookson-Cox, Hiria McRae

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The complete manuscript is available on the Ngā Pae o te Maramatanga website.

E ngā taitamariki o te ao, e ngā pou o te ako, e ngā pūtake o te mārama, e ngā mana o te iwi, tēnei ngā mihi atu kia koutou. Anei te kāhui rangahau e whāriki atu nei i mua i te aroaro o te hunga mātauranga. Hopukina mai, wānangatia, kōrerotia, me whakamahingia. Nā reira, huri noa i te motu, tēna koutou katoa.